

Appl. No. 10/049,947
Amdt. Dated March 1, 2004
Reply to Office Action of August 29, 2003

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed on August 29, 2003 is acknowledged. Applicant requests reexamination of the present application in view of the remarks which follow.

In the Drawings

The Examiner objected to the drawings because Figure 5, as originally filed, depicted a known configuration of an electrical connector but was not labeled as Prior Art. Applicant requests that Figure 5 be replaced with the included Replacement Sheet, wherein Figure 5 is labeled as Prior Art.

In the Specification

The Examiner objected to the Specification for failure to include the section headings provided in 37 C.F.R. 1.77(b). Applicant requests that the Examiner replace pages 1, 3 and 4 with replacement pages 1, 3 and 4, included herein. Replacement pages 1, 3 and 4 include section headings as requested by the Examiner.

In the Claims

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,171,149 to van Zanten. The Examiner asserts that van Zanten discloses an electrical connector (100) for mounting on a printed circuit board (column 3, lines 12-67) in the form of a matrix including a plurality of columns and rows. The Examiner further contends that van Zanten teaches several terminal member groups (101) comprising several terminal members (103) forming fixed SMT contacts to be soldered to the circuit board in a predetermined position, independently of each other, by plastic bodies (105) to which the terminal members (103) are injection-molded. In addition, the Examiner believes van Zanten discloses that several plastic bodies, along with the terminal member groups extending through the same, are adapted to be fixed in predetermined relative positions, with both the plastic bodies and the terminal member groups being movable perpendicularly to the circuit board surface independently of each other. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

The present application includes two independent claims, 1 and 11. Each of these claims requires that the electrical connector allow, in part, that the plastic body and

Appl. No. 10/049,947
Amdt. Dated March 1, 2004
Reply to Office Action of August 29, 2003

terminal member groups extending therethrough be *independently* moveable perpendicular with respect to the circuit board surface. Van Zanten does not disclose this feature.

Connector 100 taught by van Zanten includes a plurality of housings 105 including terminal member groups 101. The disclosed connector does not allow the housings or the terminal member groups to move perpendicularly from the circuit board surface independent of each other. In fact, van Zanten specifically teaches that adjacent housings can be secured to each other in a variety of ways. For example, van Zanten states that adjacent housings forming sub-assemblies can include features to secure the sub-assemblies together to form the connector. Preferably, these securing features include a snap-fit. (See van Zanten, column 4, lines 49-51). In addition, these securing features "could be, for example, a protuberance (not shown) on one housing 105 receivable by an opening (not shown) on an adjacent housing 105'." (See van Zanten, column 4, lines 51-54). Van Zanten also discloses that "other assembly techniques, such as dove tail grooves, could also be used." (See van Zanten, column 4, lines 54-55). Accordingly, van Zanten teaches that the adjacent housings would be secured together and moveable as a single unit. Thus, van Zanten does not teach housings 105 independently moveable of each other.

Figures 8 and 9 of van Zanten depict additional means that lock adjacent housings 105, 105' at a single height. As shown in Figure 8, two housings 105, 105' are joined together via junctions 153. The junctions connect the frame sections located within each of the housings 105, 105', as shown in Figure 2. In Figure 9, the two housings 105, 105' are positioned adjacent each other by bending the junctions 153 in order to align the front faces of the housings. (See van Zanten, column 7, lines 22-24). "When the housings 105, 105' are placed side-by-side, junctions 153 connect terminal frame sections 111a, 111a'. This feature provides additional grounding benefits useful in high speed applications." (See van Zanten, column 7, lines 24-27). Furthermore, van Zanten also teaches that adjacent frame sections are also connected, thereby requiring the frame sections in adjacent housings to be moveable as a single unit. Thus, van Zanten does not teach frames located in adjacent housings moveable independent of each other.

Appl. No. 10/049,947
Amdt. Dated March 1, 2004
Reply to Office Action of August 29, 2003

Van Zanten also teaches securing each terminal member 103 to the housing 105 of a unit. Figure 4 depicts the step of overmolding the housing 105 around the frame 111. As shown in Figure 4, housing 105 includes apertures 163, each receiving a post 129 connected to a terminal member 103. The extension of posts 129 through apertures 163 prevents each terminal member 103 from moving independent of the housing 105 within which the terminal member 103 is located. Further, each terminal member is retained in the position in which the terminals were originally located in the frame prior to the overmolding. Thus, the terminal members are not independently moveable with respect to each other.

The above teachings of van Zanten clearly demonstrate that the plastic bodies taught by van Zanten (housings 105) are not moveably perpendicularly to the circuit board surface *independently* of each other, as required by claims 1 and 11. Rather, in van Zanten, the adjacent housings are interlocked in some fashion in order to ensure that the housings are not moveable independently of each other. In addition, frames of adjacent housings are also not moveable independent of each other. Nor is each individual terminal member moveable independent of the remaining terminal members. Thus, van Zanten cannot anticipate these claims. Accordingly, applicant believes claims 1 and 11 are in condition for allowance. Furthermore, as all of the remaining claims depend from claims 1 and 11, applicant believes all claims of the present application are in condition for allowance.

An earnest attempt has been made to respond fully and completely to the Office Action of August 29, 2003. It is believed that this application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, passage to issuance is respectfully solicited.

Appl. No. 10/049,947
Amdt. Dated March 1, 2004
Reply to Office Action of August 29, 2003

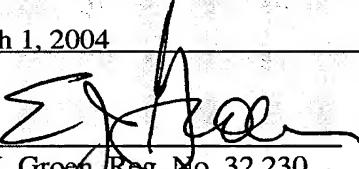
If necessary to effect a timely response, please consider this paper a request for an extension of time sufficient to make this response timely, and charge any fees due therefor, and charge any other fees or credit any overpayment to Baker & Daniels' Deposit Account No. 02-0387 (72262.90025). However, please do not include the payment of issue fees.

Respectfully submitted,


Eric J. Groen
BAKER & DANIELS
205 West Jefferson Boulevard, Suite 250
South Bend, IN 46601
Telephone: (574) 234-4149
Fax: (574)239-1900

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on

March 1, 2004
Date


Eric J. Groen, Reg. No. 32,230